

# The Food Co-op Boycott Policy

A boycott is a refusal to purchase and/or carry a product or company's product line that is not consistent with The Food Co-op Mission Statement and Principles. The Co-op Board of Directors will make a policy decision to boycott based on the social, political, environmental, production and/or marketing practices of the manufacturer or supplier.

The purposes of a boycott are:

1. To educate people about the issues involved.
2. To apply economic leverage to the offending manufacturer or supplier.

## Proposal to Boycott

Any member/owner can bring a proposal to join a boycott to the Board of Directors. When a proposal to boycott a company or product(s) is made to the Board, the Board will determine if the proposal has merit. The proposal to boycott will address the following questions:

1. Who is calling for the boycott?
2. What is/are the issue(s) being raised? Is the information upon which the boycott is based valid and verifiable? Do these issues violate our core values and mission statement?
3. What are the specific goals of the boycott? Are these goals consistent with our mission statement?

If the Board determines further action is warranted, a committee will investigate the issues.

## Investigation of Concerns

The following steps will be initiated within 30 days of the Board determination to investigate:

### **1. Corroboration**

The committee will research and corroborate the answers to the above questions presented during the initial proposal to the Board.

### **2. Store Analysis**

The General Manager will direct the affected department staff to do an analysis of the impact and implications of honoring the boycott. This will include, but not be limited to, a list of the products we carry that would be affected, information on the availability of alternative products, financial impact of the boycott, and significant difficulties in honoring the boycott.

### **3. Educational Posting**

There will be an educational posting next to the product(s) in question informing the members of the proposed boycott, clearly stating the issues involved. Educational information will also appear in the newsletter, the website, and other sources of information when possible.

### **4. Member-Owner Feedback**

Member-owners will be encouraged to comment on the proposed boycott at the site of the educational posting, and through newsletter articles, the website, board meetings and other means, where feasible.

## Committee Review

Following the Investigation of Concerns, the committee will review all information collected and make a recommendation to the Board. This recommendation may include, but not be limited to:

- to boycott by removing the company's products.
- to boycott by removing only specific products in violation.
- to not support the boycott, but continue to educate the members on the issues.

The committee will give the Board an update at the Board meeting following the initial Board determination to investigate and will make a recommendation for action within 60 days of the initial Board determination.

## **Boycott Actions**

**If a decision is made to boycott**, the following steps will be initiated within 30 days of the decision:

1. Management will notify the manufacturer and supplier by letter.
2. All unopened stock will be returned, if possible. If not, the department may sell it off, with signage that informs customers why it is being discontinued. The product(s) will not be carried as long as the boycott is in effect.
3. The Co-op will not fill special orders from members for the boycotted product(s).
4. Notice of product(s) to be boycotted and the reasons for the boycott will be posted in prominent places in the store and on the website.

**If a boycott is not initiated**, the following steps will be taken:

1. Notice of the results will be posted in a prominent place in the store and on the website.
2. Educational posting of the issues involved will continue.

## **Ending Boycotts**

The Board may end a boycott if information is received that the reasons for the boycott have been rectified. A boycott will be ended by the same procedure as it was initiated, beginning with a new investigation.

### **Submitted by the Product Selection Guidelines Committee**

Committee members who worked on this policy are:

Janet Welch, BoD representative

Deb Shortess, staff representative

Member/Owners

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